

Bideford Rural District Council

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

ANNUAL REPORTS

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

and the

SURVEYOR AND SANITARY INSPECTOR

1944.

Bideford Rural District Council,

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

ANNUAL REPORT
1944.

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF :—

Medical Officer of Health :

DR. N. BOWRING BETTS, F.R.C.S., M.O.H.

Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector :

MR. I. C. WILLIAMS, A.M.I.S.E., M.R.S.I., M.S.I.A.

Clerk :

MISS M. D. TAYLOR.

SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

The chief occupations of the inhabitants of the District are directly or indirectly associated with agriculture. A great deal of work is brought about by the popularity of the district for visitors. Many hotels, boarding houses and farms specialise in seasonal catering.

STATISTICS.

AREA (Acres)	...	...	...	...	...	53,570
POPULATION	...	...	...	...	...	6,000
NUMBER OF INHABITED HOUSES	...	...	...	...	...	1,425
RATEABLE VALUE	...	...	...	...	...	£16,664
SUM REPRESENTED BY A PENNY RATE	...	...	...	...	...	£75/6/2.449

1944.

ANNUAL REPORT
Of the Medical Officer of Health for the
Bideford Rural District

CLEVERDON HOUSE,
BRADWORTHY.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit to you my Report dealing with the Public
Health and general conditions of the district during the year 1944.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

N. BOWRING BETTS,

Medical Officer of Health.

VITAL STATISTICS.

Births.	1944
Birth Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population ...	17.06
Birth Rate per 1,000 for England and Wales	17.6
Still Birth Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) Births ...	20.8

Deaths.	1944
Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population ...	11.8
Corrected Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population	11.4
Death Rate per 1,000 for England and Wales	11.6

Deaths from Puerperal Causes.	Deaths	Rate per 1,000 (live and still) Births
Puerperal Sepsis	Nil	Nil
Other Puerperal Causes	Nil	Nil
Total	Nil	Nil

Deaths of Infants under One Year of Age	1944
Legitimate	3
Illegitimate	Nil

Death Rate.	1944
All Infants per 1,000 live births	31.2
Legitimate Infants per 1,000 legitimate live births	33.5
All Infants per 1,000 live births (England and Wales) ...	46
Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	8
Deaths from Measles (all ages)	Nil
Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages)	Nil
Deaths from Diarrhoea (under 2 years)	Nil

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA.

Hospitals.

1. Tuberculosis.

There are no hospitals for the reception of tuberculous patients in this district. Advanced cases are usually treated at Hawley Sanatorium, Barnstaple. Convalescent patients from this district are sometimes sent to the Devon County Council's large and well-equipped sanatorium at Hawkmoor, South Devon.

2. Isolation of Infectious Diseases.

Any cases of infectious diseases which cannot be isolated, or properly cared for at home, are conveyed to the Bideford and District Joint Isolation Hospital, which comprises 30 beds, 4 cots and 8 observation cubicles.

During 1944 4 cases were admitted to the Isolation Hospital from the Bideford Rural District, patients suffering from Scarlet Fever, 4, from Diphtheria nil and from Cerebro-Spinal Meningitis, nil.

3. Smallpox.

The Smallpox Hospital of the Devon County Council provides treatment for any case of smallpox that may arise in this District.

4. General.

The Bideford and District Hospital serves the District extremely well for general medical and surgical treatment. The Hospital contains about 40 beds.

District Nursing.

There are six District Nurses, all qualified midwives, working in the district.

Laboratory Facilities.

This District is admirably served by the Devon County Council Medical Department's Bacteriological Laboratory, which is situated at Dix's Field, Exeter.

Disinfection of Infected Bedding and Clothing.

By arrangement with the Bideford and District Joint Isolation Hospital Board, any infected bedding and clothing can be disinfected in the steam disinfecting apparatus at the Isolation Hospital.

Ambulance Facilities.

There is a St. John Ambulance stationed at Bideford, which serves the Rural District. There is also a separate ambulance stationed at the Isolation Hospital, which is used for the conveyance of patients suffering from any of the notifiable infectious diseases.

PREVALENCE OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Notifications.

DISEASES				Total number of cases notified	Cases admitted to Hospital	Total Deaths
				1944	1944	1944
Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	4	4	Nil
Diphtheria	...	...	...	Nil	Nil	Nil
Puerperal Pyrexia	...	...	...	Nil	Nil	Nil
Pneumonia	...	...	...	3	Nil	Nil
Dysentery	...	...	...	Nil	Nil	Nil
Erysipelas	...	...	...	Nil	Nil	Nil
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	...	...	...	Nil	Nil	Nil
Anterior Poliomyelitis	...	...	...	Nil	Nil	Nil
Measles	...	...	...	1	Nil	Nil
Whooping Cough	...	...	...	Nil	Nil	Nil
Acute Encephalitis Lethargica	...	...	...	1	Nil	1

Diphtheria Immunisation.

A high proportion of the children under 15 years of age have availed themselves of the above scheme. Each school in the district has been visited and 42 children have been immunised during the year.

Tuberculosis.

The number of cases of Tuberculosis remaining on the register was as follows :—

					31st Dec., 1944
(a) PULMONARY	Males	...	...	...	12
	Females	...	...	...	9
(b) NON-PULMONARY	Males	...	...	...	4
	Females	...	...	...	5
Total Cases on the Register, December 31st, 1944					21
" " " " " " " " 1943					23
" " " " " " " " 1942					18
" " " " " " " " 1941					17
" " " " " " " " 1940					19
" " " " " " " " 1939					18

1. New Cases.

During the year 4 cases were notified in accordance with the regulations.

					1944
(a) PULMONARY.	Males	...	...	...	3
	Females	...	...	...	1
(b) NON-PULMONARY.	Males	...	...	...	Nil
	Females	...	...	...	Nil
Total					4

The following are the notification for the preceding five years :

	Pulmonary	Non-Pulmonary	Total
1943	3	4	7
1942	5	1	6
1941	2	0	2
1940	1	3	4
1939	2	1	3

2. Age Periods (New Cases).

					PULMONARY		NON-PULMONARY.	
					1944		1944	
					M.	F.	M.	F.
Under 1 year	...	...	...	...	0	0	0	0
1 to 5 years	...	...	...	...	0	0	0	0
5 to 10 years	...	...	...	...	0	0	0	0
10 to 15 years	...	...	...	...	0	0	0	0
15 to 25 years	...	...	...	...	1	0	0	0
25 to 35 years	...	...	...	...	1	1	0	0
35 to 45 years	...	...	...	...	1	0	0	0
45 to 55 years	...	...	...	...	0	0	0	0
55 to 65 years	...	...	...	...	0	0	0	0
65 and over	...	...	...	...	0	0	0	0

MORTALITY FROM TUBERCULOSIS.

1944.

Total Deaths—2 (Respiratory 1, Non-Respiratory 1).

					Respiratory.		Non-Respiratory.	
Under 1 year	...	...	...	...	0	0	0	0
1 to 5 years	...	...	...	...	0	0	0	0
5 to 10 years	...	...	...	...	0	0	0	0
10 to 15 years	...	...	...	...	0	0	0	0
15 to 25 years	...	...	...	...	0	0	0	1
25 to 35 years	...	...	...	...	1	0	0	0
35 to 45 years	...	...	...	...	0	0	0	0
45 to 55 years	...	...	...	...	0	0	0	0
55 to 65 years	...	...	...	...	0	0	0	0
65 and Over	...	...	...	...	0	0	0	0

CAUSES OF DEATH DURING THE YEAR UNDER REVIEW.

CAUSES OF DEATH.	1944	
	M.	F.
Typhoid and Paratyphoid Fevers	0	0
Measles	0	0
Scarlet Fever	0	0
Whooping Cough	0	0
Diphtheria	0	0
Influenza	0	0
Encephalitis Lethargica	0	1
Cerebro-Spinal Fever	0	1
Tuberculosis of Respiratory System	1	0
Other Tuberculosis Diseases	0	1
Syphilis	0	0
General Paralysis of the Insane, Tabes Dorsalis	0	0
Cancer, Malignant Disease	3	5
Diabetes	0	0
Cerebral Hæmorrhage, etc.	7	4
Heart Disease	12	13
Aneurism	0	0
Other Circulatory Diseases	0	0
Bronchitis	0	1
Pneumonia (all forms)	1	0
Other Respiratory Diseases	2	0
Peptic Ulcer	0	0
Diarrhœa (under 2 years)	0	0
Appendicitis	0	0
Cirrhosis of Liver	0	0
Other Diseases of Liver, etc.	0	0
Other Digestive Diseases	0	0
Acute and Chronic Nephritis	1	0
Puerperal Sepsis	0	0
Other Puerperal Causes	0	0
Premature Births	1	1
Birth Injury, Congenital Malformation	1	0
Senility	0	0
Suicide	0	0
Other Violence... ..	2	1
Other defined Diseases	2	2
Causes Ill-Defined or Unknown	0	0
Special Causes (Included above) :—		
Small-Pox... ..	0	0
Poliomyelitis	0	0
Polioencephalitis	0	0
ALL CAUSES	33	30

Parkham Hostel.

The above Hostel at Parkham Rectory has been available during the year for the treatment of evacuee children suffering from Enuresis. "Difficult" children are also admitted. It has accommodation for 20 children.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

N. BOWRING BETTS,

Medical Officer of Health.

1944

ANNUAL REPORT

Of the Sanitary Inspector and Surveyor
for the Bideford Rural District

HEALTH DEPARTMENT,
MARKET PLACE,
BIDEFORD.

September, 1944.

Gentlemen,

I beg to submit to you a report relating to the work carried out by this department during 1944.

The Council approved unanimously the proposals for the sewerage of the district which it was my honour to draw up during the year. Also, they approved preliminary plans for the erection in the immediate post-war years of 106 new houses. These two Schemes will involve an expenditure of approximately £160,000 to £170,000.

Much work lies ahead. It is hoped that it will be completed in a reasonable time.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

I. C. WILLIAMS,
Sanitary Surveyor.

Short-Term Post-War Housing Programme.

Following upon meetings with Parish Councils and parish representatives at which the Rural Council representatives were the visitors it was decided to obtain permission from the Ministry of Health to erect 106 houses in thirteen parishes. Seventy-five sites were inspected, sixty-one of which had been suggested by the parish representatives. Of this number 31 were considered suitable as possible sites for houses. Following further consideration this number was reduced to 14. The largest number of houses proposed for a single site was eight and the smallest, two.

Priority for building was given to five sites as follows :—

East Putford	...	...	...	Two dwellings
Monkleigh	...	...	...	Six „
Hartland	...	...	...	Eight „
Buckland Brewer	...	...	...	Six „
Clovelly	...	...	...	Four „

Detailed preparations can later be made for the erection of a number of the remaining eighty.

Rural Housing Survey.

If the Council's long-term housing programme is to be methodically dealt with, the survey of existing conditions as required by the 1944 Hobhouse Report must be carried out. "Housing," states the Report, "is now the principal single function of Rural District Councils." I submit that the survey is the essential prerequisite of the Council's housing administration for the next decade.

Hartland Water Supply.

The Hartland Water Scheme was completed successfully in May 1944. The final cost was in the region of £5,000. Up to 500 persons daily are supplied from the fifteen water fountains. Water may now be taken into the houses subject to certain conditions. In dry summer periods the Scheme can provide only ten gallons per head per day, so future augmentation is essential.

The source of supply is an ancient field drain in Furze Park. Here there is an intake chamber and a 1,000 gallon collection tank constructed of concrete rings five feet in diameter. By means of 3in. asbestos-cement pressure pipes water is then conveyed 2,500 feet to the Chlorination House (Wallace & Tiernan electrically operated semi-automatic Hypochlorinators) and a 15,000 gallon storage reservoir in mass concrete with stilling chamber, situated on high ground near the village.

There is an overflow to a roadwater drain, conveniently situated. A 4in. asbestos-cement pressure pipeline carries the treated water through the town for a distance of 1475 feet from whence a 3in. asbestos-cement pressure main conveys the water 566 feet to its terminus on the west of the town, at which point there is a fire hydrant.

The scheme is provided with the necessary sluice and air valves, and contains in miniature most of the essentials of modern water engineering practice.

THE WATER AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL ARRANGEMENTS OF THE DISTRICT.

Prevailing Conditions.

The following data is based on the assumption that any portion of the rural district with more than twenty houses in a circle a quarter of a mile across should have a main water supply and a main sewerage scheme. This can be called the "Circle/Density" system, and has already been used by the Ministry of Health for the purpose of statistical returns.

EXISTING CONDITIONS.

IN 7 SIZEABLE GROUPS OF BUILDINGS :—No main sewerage
IN THE SIX AREAS WITH MAIN SEWERS:—Only three have minimum requirements for sewage purification works. A fourth disposes direct to sea. 170 houses actually in the villages are not connected to sewers.

IN THE WHOLE DISTRICT :—Only one village (namely Clovelly) has a main water supply available to each house.

Provision of Main Water Supplies.

The water supply position can be improved by main extension, and increasing the water supply, in Hartland and Buckland Brewer villages, and by main extension only in Abbotsham. This leaves nine sizeable groups of houses to which it follows that an entirely new water supply will sooner or later be provided.

Fortunately, the proposed North Devon Water Scheme in possible conjunction with the Northam Water Undertaking is capable of supplying these villages with water, and can augment the Buckland Brewer, Clovelly Village (if necessary) and in all probability the Hartland Scheme. In addition the scheme will provide many isolated farms with an adequate and pure water supply.

Sewerage.

This Council has now by resolution agreed to provide its own separate new sewage works in the following built-up areas :—

Alwington (Fairy Cross & Ford)
Buckland Brewer
Bucks Mills
Littleham
Monkleigh
Parkham
Saltrens
Stoke

and possibly Higher Clovelly. Circular 119/44 Ministry of Health confirms that separate sewage works to each group of houses will often be the only method available.

Sewers.

The Council will also renew almost all the sewers in the whole of the district. In this connection it is interesting to note that the sewers in this district, perhaps without exception, are vested in, and are the responsibility of this Council under the Public Health Act 1936.

Individual Methods of Sewage Disposal

Under the "Circle/Density" system of grouping it will be seen that it is unlikely that Bulkworthy, East Putford, Newton St. Petrock and Welcombe together with all the isolated farmhouses and cottages throughout the whole of our district will be given the facility of main drainage until such time as a sufficient number of additional houses are erected nearby to demand a main sewerage scheme. Drainage of isolated buildings presents a difficult health problem. There is no doubt that the whole of the countryside is in need of a thorough cleansing.

Polluted Private Wells.

A great many private wells in the district are merely catchpits for the water contained in the subsoil, and are therefore very liable to pollution, chiefly from nearby defective drainage.

Acid Waters and Lead Poisoning.

Tests carried out by this department of many well water supplies in the district have proved that the water, with few exceptions, is acid in reaction, and where lead pipes are in use, samples of the water have usually contained lead after the water has been standing in the pipes overnight.

The general effect of lead intake may be said to constitute a gradual, insidious and cumulative menace which is accepted as being very serious.

Action to Improve Private Water Supplies.

It is now the practice of this department to test new well supplies for acidity, and to recommend suitable piping for the water. It would be a good thing to make water byelaws which could be interpreted among other things, to prohibit the use of lead pipes for plumbo-solvent waters.

As to the wells which are contaminated by sewage and other matters, these should be dealt with rigidly under the Public Health Act. In this connection, financial assistance by this Council might be possible under the Act. These steps would gradually improve the condition of the private water supplies, many of which it will no doubt be considered uneconomical to replace by a water main.

ANALYSIS OF MAIN WATER AND SEWERAGE FACILITIES IN THE DISTRICT.

NUMBER OF HOUSES WITH :—

PARISH.	Piped main water supply under pressure into or on to houses.	Main water supply under pressure within 100 yards of house boundary	No water under pressure available; for groups of 20 or more houses in a circle $\frac{1}{4}$ mile in diameter.	Main sewer connections for groups of 20 or more houses in a circle $\frac{1}{4}$ mile in diameter.	No main sewer connection for groups of 20 or more houses in a circle $\frac{1}{4}$ mile in diameter.
ABBOTSHAM	52	Nil	14	18	27
ALWINGTON	2	Nil	31	Nil	31
BUCKLAND BREWER.....	Nil	55	8	18	45
BULKWORTHY	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
CLOVELLY VILLAGE	96	7	Nil	98	5
SLERRA AREA	Nil	Nil	39	Nil	39
EAST PUTFORD	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
HARTLAND	Nil	92	33	63	62
STOKE AREA	Nil	Nil	21	Nil	21
LANDCROSS	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
LITTLEHAM	2	Nil	33	Nil	33
MONKLEIGH	Nil	Nil	39	Nil	39
SALTRENS AREA.....	Nil	Nil	21	Nil	21
NEWTON ST. PETROCK ...	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
PARKHAM	1	Nil	31	9	22
WELCOMBE.....	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
WOOLSEY	Nil	Nil	49	40	9
BUCKS MILLS AREA	Nil	Nil	32	Nil	32

SUMMARY OF INSPECTIONS AND VISITS.

NATURE OF VISIT OR INSPECTION :					1944
General Sanitary Matters.					
Water Supply, Public and Private	...	...	...	...	419
Drainage and Sewerage...	...	...	...	...	291
Temporary Dwellings	...	...	...	...	3
Bakehouses	...	...	...	...	2
Public Conveniences	...	...	...	...	40
Refuse Collection	...	...	...	...	20
Refuse Disposal	...	...	...	...	27
Rats and Mice	...	...	...	...	22
Schools	...	...	...	...	41
Shops	...	...	...	...	1
Miscellaneous Sanitary Visits	...	...	...	...	249
Under Public Health and Housing Acts.					
Number of House Inspections	...	...	...	...	119
Miscellaneous Housing Visits	...	...	...	...	279
Infectious Diseases.					
Inquiries	...	...	...	...	1
Disinfections	...	...	...	...	1
Meat and Food Inspection.					
Complete days spent at Abattoir	...	...	...	...	16
Cowsheds, Dairies and Milkshops	...	...	...	...	151
Miscellaneous Food Visits	...	...	...	...	17
TOTALS					1699

NOTICES SERVED UNDER PUBLIC HEALTH AND HOUSING ACTS.

NOTICES SERVED AND COMPLIED WITH :					1944
Number of Informal Notices Served	...	...	...	...	51
Number of Informal Notices Complied with	...	...	...	...	47
Number of Statutory Notices Served	...	...	...	...	1
Number of Statutory Notices Complied with	...	...	...	...	1

HOUSING STATISTICS.

During the year, 119 house inspections were made, and an additional 279 miscellaneous housing visits were undertaken. Details have been given under the "Summary of Inspections and Visits."

It is usual to tabulate complete housing statistics in Annual Health Reports, but owing to labour and material shortage, the inspections were, in the main, of a minor character. Therefore it is proposed to omit the usual figures from this report, and provide cumulative statistics in 1945 during which year it will no doubt have been possible to carry out certain major statutory works.

It is interesting to note that Licences authorising repair, extension and reconditioning work to a total value of £13,000 have been issued by this department on behalf of the Council in the twelve months prior to writing this report. The issuing of these Certificates by the Local Authority is an important function usually requiring an actual inspection of the proposed work, and the Ministries concerned appear to have made a wise move in delegating this power to individual Councils.

BUILDING BYELAWS.

The provisions of the Council's Building Byelaws (adopted in 1938 with the approval of the Ministry of Health) continued to be enforced during the year.

PLANS.

Owing to war conditions only eight plans have been approved during the year.

COUNCIL HOUSES.

The Council Houses are visited from time to time, usually by request, with due regard to the feelings of the occupants. Any necessary repairs, renovations or small improvements are carried out as quickly as the labour situation permits.

Council Houses are situated in the undermentioned parishes :—

Abbotsham	...	...	...	...	2
Alwington	...	...	...	...	4
Buckland Brewer	...	...	...	...	2
Clovelly	...	...	...	...	2
Hartland	...	...	...	...	6
Littleham	...	...	...	...	2
Monkleigh	...	...	...	...	2
Parkham	...	...	...	...	6
Woolsery	...	...	...	...	4
Total					30

RIVERS AND STREAMS.

In this district there are no trade wastes or effluent to deal with and as a consequence, it has not been necessary to devote much attention to the prevention of polluting matters entering rivers or streams. There is room for improvement, however, but the action must come in the form of a tightening up of drainage treatment arrangements.

PUBLIC CLEANSING.

Public scavenging is regularly carried out by Contract in the parishes of Clovelly, Hartland and Woolsery, and as and when required in the parish of Abbotsham.

There are six refuse dumps in the district at two of which an endeavour is made to practise controlled tipping. At the remaining four dumps villagers make their own arrangements for the conveyance of refuse, and it will be realised that dumping is somewhat indiscriminate.

SMOKE ABATEMENT.

No action under this heading has been necessary during the period under review.

SWIMMING BATHS AND POOLS.

There are no public or privately owned swimming baths or pools in the district.

ERADICATION OF BED BUGS.

It is satisfactory to note that, in this District, no complaints relating to the existence of bed bugs have been received during the year, and accordingly no action has been taken.

SCHOOLS.

There are seventeen schools in the District, all of which are inspected when necessary. This Department has brought many defects to the notice of the County Council who have co-operated amicably.

The "Milk in Schools Scheme" continues to operate successfully. The water supplies to the schools are in most cases derived from wells on the premises.

The School Canteens are greatly appreciated by parents and children alike, providing as they do a varied and well-balanced diet in congenial surroundings. These canteens are run very well indeed.

HOUSING (RURAL WORKERS) ACTS.

During 1944 only one cottage was reconditioned under the Housing (Rural Workers) Acts. The total number of houses reconditioned in the district since the inception of the Scheme is 79.

MEAT SUPPLY.

Since the centralisation of slaughtering arrangements of the Ministry of Food came into force on January 15th, 1940, the inspectorial duties have been largely confined to inspection of meat at the Public Abattoir, Bideford, by arrangement with Mr. John Ackland, Meat and Food Inspector, Bideford, as and when assistance was required. On no occasion was it necessary to condemn meat in this district after it had once been inspected at the Public Abattoir, a tribute to the zeal of the Bideford Food Inspector, with whom it is a pleasure to be associated.

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT, 1938.

Twelve premises have been approved and licensed for the preparation or manufacture of sausages and potted, pressed or pickled meat. One building has also been approved for the sale, or the manufacture for sale, of ice-cream.

MILK SUPPLY.

Many dairy buildings are in an unsatisfactory state, and there still remains a lack of the knowledge of clean milking methods.

In this district, only one producer in sixty possesses a "T.T." licence, and only one in fourteen an "Accredited" licence. It can be seen, therefore, that there is a Herculean task ahead for the Departments concerned in the post-war production of milk.

All milk producers in the area have been registered by this Council. Visits are paid as and when possible to dairy premises, and occasional milk samples taken. If the 310 milk producers were to be visited only four times a year, at least 1,240 inspections would have to be made — a full time job for at least one person. In actual fact only 151 visits were paid to dairy premises during the year under review.

NUMBER OF REGISTERED MILK PRODUCERS, ALL GRADES	310
NUMBER OF "TUBERCULIN TESTED" MILK PRODUCERS	6
NUMBER OF "ACCREDITED" MILK PRODUCERS ...	23
NUMBER SUPPLYING UNDER THE "MILK IN SCHOOLS" SCHEME FROM UNGRADED PREMISES	4

I am, Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

I. C. WILLIAMS,
Sanitary Surveyor.

